

Schoenberg: the texts he used*

By JAN MAEGAARD

One may often find that a considerable part of a composer's personality is reflected in his choice of texts and in the ways he used them. In dealing with the song texts of the Vienna School composers I realized that this is certainly so in the case of Arnold Schoenberg.¹ Therefore, I have found it worth while to look deeper into the matter. The following survey includes both song texts and literary works and stories considered by Schoenberg for vocal composition or otherwise. Not included are quotations of well known melodies such as "Ach du lieber Augustin" in the *2nd String Quartet* and Fr. Silcher's "Ännchen von Tharau" in the *Suite* op. 29, nor are the more or less secret programs associated with certain instrumental compositions considered.² The text is divided into five sections reflecting Schoenberg's development as a composer.

Before 1900

As appears from the list at the end of this essay, 12 out of 20 authors represented in Schoenberg's music before 1900 were born in the first half of the 19th century. It concerns 31 songs and fragments composed between 1893 and 1898, among them 14 are set to texts by Ludwig Pfau. Born before 1800 are Goethe and Zedlitz with one text each. Born after 1850 are six poets with 18 song texts, 11 of them by Richard Dehmel, all of them composed late in the decade. Aside from Goethe, none of the poets Schoenberg chose until 1900 have attained lasting fame. His interest in Ludwig Pfau conforms with his warm sympathy at the time with the workers' movement. Pfau was an outstanding political poet and critic. He participated in the revolution in Baden in 1848, and founded the humorous magazine *Eulenspiegel*, but then had to flee to Switzerland. After some further years in Paris he settled in Stuttgart in 1865. There he was later on punished for his attacks on Bismarck and the Prussian way of life.

A change occurs at the end of this period with the appearance of Richard Dehmel as his preferred poet. Born in 1863, Dehmel was just 11 years older than Schoenberg, and he was a strong and soon-to-become famous representative among

* My thanks to Dr. Charlotte Cross, New York, who has helped me find the correct English expressions in this text.

¹ Jan Maegaard, "Die Komponisten der Wiener Schule und ihre Textdichter sowie das Komponisten-Dichter-Verhältnis heute," *Studien zur Wertungsforschung* 20, Otto Kolleritsch ed., p. 168-183. Vienna, Universal Edition, 1988.

² See Walter Bailey, *Programmatic Elements in the Works of Schoenberg* (Studies in Musicology vol. 74) p. 129ff. Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1984.

poets of the new ideas coming up in the 1890s. His expressive, sometimes ecstatic, poems are cast in unconventional patterns, thus freeing German poetry from the staleness that was then threatening. By his belief in the mystical powers of love and sex, his naturalistic point of departure developed beyond naturalism as he considered sensual relations to have the power to exalt the human personality and lead to a higher spiritual life. Dehmel was a follower of Nietzsche in that he praised individuality and called for an ecstatic mode of living. As we shall see, his poetry came to Schoenberg as a kind of revelation.

Stylistically Schoenberg's music during those years comes close to that of Brahms whom both he and his three years older friend and advisor Alexander von Zemlinsky admired. Both were decidedly on his side in the Wagner-Brahms strife which so much occupied the minds of the time. This position implied rejection of the symphonic poem as introduced by Franz Liszt at the middle of the century and followed up by Smetana, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, César Franck and Richard Strauss.

But this attitude also underwent a change in Schoenberg's mind towards the turn of the century. In 1898 he worked on extended sketches for a symphonic music based on a sombre poem by Nikolaus Lenau, *Frühlings Tod*, and a short sketch of 13 measures was intended to become another work in this genre with the title *Hans im Glück*, a well-known fairy-tale. However, the true breakthrough in this genre occurred with the string sextet, op. 4, based on Dehmel's poem *Verklärte Nacht* composed late in 1899. This poem is typical of its author in that it tells the story of a young man who accepts a girl as his beloved one, although she is pregnant with another man, a truly provocative story at that time. Still more remarkable, however, is the fact that this piece of program music is non-symphonic. Until then chamber music had been spared the burden of serving programmatic purposes – with the sole and easily forgivable exception of the aging and sick Smetana's two string quartets, the first of them titled *My Life*. Schoenberg was not so easily forgiven. *Verklärte Nacht* is not an old man's reflections on his own destiny, but a young and daring composer's break with tradition. Another programmatic work for string sextet from approximately the same time is *Toter Winkel* (Dead Corner) based on a poem by Gustav Falke. Whether it actually predates *Verklärte Nacht* can not be definitely established. Anyway, it remained a fragment.

A further innovation occurred in a song on a poem by the young Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Die Beiden*, also 1899. A manuscript of this song contains the following direction: "weniger gesungen als declamierend, beschreibend, vorzutragen; wie von einem alten Bilde herablesend"³ This must be seen as the first indication by Schoenberg of what was after the turn of the century to become *Sprechgesang*.

³ "To be rendered in a reciting, descriptive, rather than in a singing way; as if reading down from an old picture." Unfortunately this direction has not been reproduced in the *Sämtliche Werke*.

1900-1907

The experience with Dehmel was followed up by a series of similar challenges from modern literature in the years to come. The first of them seems to have come from the Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen. Zemlinsky is likely to have called Schoenberg's attention to this poet, who introduced naturalism to Danish literature. He had composed several songs to his texts and had had them published by Wilhelm Hansen in Copenhagen. Schoenberg's composition of Jacobsen's *Gurre-Lieder* was started in May 1900, apparently in response to a competition for a song cycle with piano arranged by the Vienna Tonkünstlerverein around New Year 1900. Actually, most of the text was originally composed as songs with piano. Then Schoenberg changed his mind and turned it into a vocal work with six soloists, three men's choruses, mixed choir and a huge orchestra, and included introduction, interludes and the choral sections near the end. One reason for this decision seems to have been the fact that meanwhile a performance of *Verklärte Nacht* had been rejected by the Tonkünstlerverein, allegedly because of a chord which a member of the board did not accept as legitimate in tonal harmony.⁴

The story of *Gurre-Lieder* takes place in Denmark in the 14th century. At his hunting seat Gurre, King Valdemar IV makes love to Tove, a girl of the people, until Queen Hedwig in her jealousy sees to it that she is killed by the heat of the bath. The King, in powerless wrath, charges God with having deprived him of Tove, and is therefore condemned to eternally hunting with his men at night in the woods around Gurre Lake.

Throughout, the acting characters, including the Wood Dove, speak with their own voices. Only at the end in "The Wild Hunt of the Summer Wind", when it is all over, the words are spoken by the poet himself. He refers the story just told to the night of darkness and obscurity, and hails the rising sun that will bring daylight, thus preparing for the concluding glorious hymn to the sun. Here Jacobsen, the budding naturalist, is taking leave with romanticism. So, although the story is somehow reminiscent of *Tristan and Isolde* the artistic approach to it is different. That Schoenberg was perfectly aware of this can be seen from the fact that the poet's words at the end are not sung, but recited in *Sprechstimme*, which is here fully developed with appropriate notation. It is true that *Sprechstimme* had been applied by Engelbert Humperdinck in *Die sieben Geislein*, 1895; but there is no indication that Schoenberg was aware of that. The composition was concluded in 1901, but the orchestration dragged out. Not until 1910-11, when Franz Schreker expressed his wish to perform the work with his newly founded Akademischer Chor, was it concluded.

Another, and totally different, current attracted Schoenberg's interest at the turn of the century: the literary cabaret. Eight cabaret songs, the so-called "Brettlieder", all of them composed in 1901, have come down to us. Schoenberg actually

⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, "Criteria for the Evaluation of Music," *Style and Idea*, Leonard Stein ed., Leo Black trans., p. 131f. London, Faber & Faber, 1975.

worked as a *Kapellmeister* at Ernst von Wolzogen's "Buntes Theater" in Berlin, the so-called "Überbrettl", from December 1901 to the end of July 1902. It is generally assumed that the cabaret songs were composed for this purpose; but it appears that those six of them which have got a definite date were all composed between April and September 1901, i.e. before Schoenberg even met Wolzogen.⁵ And when we see that the manuscript of one of them bears the stamp "Jung-Wiener Theater »zum lieben Augustin«. Direktion." we must conclude that Schoenberg composed these songs on his own and tried to sell them in Vienna, but in vain. Three of them are found in O.J. Bierbaum's *Deutsche Chansons*.⁶ The others are not.

A lot of fun is contained in these songs, in both text and music. Considering the profoundly serious works Schoenberg has become known for, one may wonder whether the Brettlieder represent the "true Schoenberg". I do not see any contradiction. It is only reasonable that his profound seriousness be counterbalanced by an equally sharp sense of humor. In fact, there are frequent comic moments in Schoenberg's works. How could the "Tanzscene" of the *Serenade*, op. 24, "Am Scheideweg" and "Der neue Klassicismus" of the *Drei Satiren*, op. 28, or the variation movement of the *Septet*, op. 29, have been composed if Schoenberg lacked sense of humor? Only, here it is more subtle. In the Brettlieder it is right on the surface in cabaret style for everyone to hear, and that, of course, is an exception. We may notice that at the same time, 1901, Schoenberg worked on the text of a comic opera, *Die Schildbürger*, which was never completed.

The stay in Berlin 1901-03 drew his attention elsewhere. He met Richard Strauss who was very impressed by the score of the *Gurre-Lieder*, and helped him to a teaching position at Das Sternsche Konservatorium. He also obtained for him the Liszt-Stipendium for two years. At that time Strauss was on the look-out for an opera libretto. In his search he had come upon *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Maurice Maeterlinck. It attracted him, but was not exactly what he was looking for, so he suggested to Schoenberg to compose an opera on that text. He, too, felt attracted by it; but he decided to utilize it for a symphonic poem for large orchestra. None of them was aware of Debussy's opera on the same text, premiered in Paris in April 1902.

A subject often encountered in literature before and after 1900 is that of *eros* and *thanatos* – love and death. One finds it already in *Tristan und Isolde*. It governs the *Gurre-Lieder* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* as well, and both tell stories of tragic women destinies. In the latter Prince Golaud marries Mélisande and kills his younger brother Pelléas out of jealousy. She dies in childbed with a baby in her arms whose father is never identified. Golaud must live on with his doubts, his guilt and his shame. Besides open similarities there is a characteristic difference between Jacobsen, the young naturalist, and Maeterlinck, the symbolist, in the ways they tell their stories. In a late note on the work Schoenberg hints at that:

⁵ Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg. His Life, World and Work*, John Calder trans., p. 49f. New York, Schirmer, 1977.

⁶ *Deutsche Chansons* (Brettlieder) von Bierbaum et al. Berlin-Leipzig, Schuster & Löffler, 1900.

It was around 1900 when Maurice Maeterlinck fascinated composers, stimulating them to make music to his dramatic poems. What attracted all was his art of dramatizing eternal problems of humanity in the form of fairy-tales, lending them timelessness without adhering to imitation of ancient styles.⁷

In Maeterlinck time and location are unspecified. The characters are fictitious beings acting almost unconsciously, commended to their fate. The setting is unreal, but saturated by symbols. So, had Jacobsen dissociated himself from the time past, then Maeterlinck did away with it altogether. The work was concluded in 1903.

This brings us back to Vienna. When Schoenberg returned from Berlin in that year he found his native city almost a cauldron of cultural activities. The effects of the secessionist painters breaking up from the Genossenschaft der bildenden Künstler Wiens in 1897 and of Karl Kraus' critical and satirical magazine *Die Fackel* since 1899 were now making themselves felt. A tendency to subvert hide-bound traditions and habits was taking overhand in all fields of cultural activity. In 1903 Akademischer Verein für Kunst und Literatur was founded as a parallel to Sezession. It turned out to be short-lived. But at the same time the far more successful Ansorge-Verein, later to adopt the name Verein für Kunst und Kultur, started up. Here new poetry and new music were presented, often together with exhibitions of the Hagenbund, a group of painters who had parted from the Sezession. Among the poets who were invited to appear we find Richard Dehmel and Stefan George, and among the composers Zemlinsky and Schoenberg. In that same year Peter Altenberg [Richard Engländer] who was very active in the Ansorge-Verein, started his magazine *Kunst. Halbmonatsschrift für Kunst und alles andere*, and Adolf Loos, the pioneer of modern architecture, appeared with his *Das Andere. Ein Blatt zur Einführung von abendländischer Kultur in Österreich*. Both were short-lived; but they were read by the cultural elite, and they advocated the new ideas of the time polemically sharper than ever seen before.

In the following year, 1904, Schoenberg and Zemlinsky inaugurated a new enterprise, Vereinigung schaffender Tonkünstler, in order to pave the way for performances of new music, not restricted to chamber music and songs. It was very pretentious, and therefore also short-lived. During its only season of existence two song recitals, two chamber music evenings and two symphonic concerts were presented. In the first of these, in January 1905, *Pelleas und Melisande* was premiered together with music by Zemlinsky, Siegmund von Hausegger and Oskar Posa. The big event of the season, however, was the first performance of Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* to texts by Friedrich Rückert together with his *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and further four Rückert songs presented at a special concert with soloists from the Court Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Mahler. This concert was full and had to be repeated.

⁷ "Foreword to a Broadcast of *Pelleas and Melisande*," *The Music of ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG* vol. 2, textbook, n. p. Columbia M2S 694, 1963.

Schoenberg's choice of texts after his return to Vienna and after his Brettlexperiences testifies to a growing awareness of contemporary poetry. Among the published songs it concerns op. 3 nos. 1, 2 and 5, op. 6, 1-8, and the orchestral songs op. 8, 1-6, a total of 17 songs. Besides there are 29 fragments. 23 out of 34 authors in this section were born after 1850. Most of those born before that date are celebrities whose fame is still lasting. Goethe reappears with one complete song, two fragments and 11 short texts used for composition of canons, which occupied Schoenberg intensely in 1905. New is Petrarch. Exactly when Schoenberg got to know him is not clear. The copy of his sonnets in Schoenberg's library bears no date; but his appreciation of this Italian classic can be seen from the fact that this volume is handbound by him. The same goes for the volume of the folksong collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* which is also new in this section, and from which five poems were chosen. Both books show marks of intense use. Schoenberg's interest in the *Wunderhorn* poetry also calls his relation to Gustav Mahler to the mind. This was certainly a complicated one. The time when he composed his first setting of a *Wunderhorn* poem coincides with the time the two men first met. It was at Arnold Rosé's rehearsals of *Verklärte Nacht* in 1903. At that time Schoenberg is known to have disapproved of Mahler's music; he actually told so himself in the famous "Prager Rede" after Mahler's death.⁸ Here he commented upon his first hearing of Mahler's 2nd symphony, probably the Vienna performance of April 9 1899. Mahler, on his part, found the younger composer's music overcomplicated. But a mutual respect developed between the two of them, and by 1906 it had grown into a true friendship.⁹ The *Wunderhorn*-texts occupied Schoenberg until 1905. They form parts of his opp. 3 and 8. Otherwise, with the exception of two texts by Keller and one by Nietzsche, the eight songs of op. 6 are composed on texts by relatively young poets: Julius Hart, Dehmel, Hermann Conradi (another "wild" poet), John Mackay and Kurt Aram.

In that year, 1905, a new genre appears in Schoenberg's oeuvre: the vocal canon (see separate list). It is true that an early choir, *Friedlicher Abend*, on a poem by Lenau is partly canonic; but it could not count among the actual canons. We know a total of 71 canons by Schoenberg, complete or fragmentary, with or without texts. Eleven of them originate in this year, all to texts by Goethe. Chronologically they stand quite isolated, for not until 1925 did Schoenberg take up this genre again. Significantly, this sudden involvement in technical command precedes Schoenberg's first serious adventures in non-tonal composition, namely the two instrumental works *Ein Stelldichein* for oboe, clarinet, violin, cello and piano, which remained a fragment, and the *1st Chamber Symphony*, op. 9, for 15 instruments. In these the music is indeed basically tonal but still, long stretches are composed contrapuntally along lines independent of tonal harmony. Seen in

⁸ Arnold Schönberg et al., *Gustav Mahler*, p. 13. Tübingen, Wunderlich, [1966].

⁹ See Schoenberg's letter to Mahler of July 18 1906. Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler. Memories and Letters*, Donald Mitchell and Knud Martner ed., Basil Creighton trans., p. 279. 4th ed. London, Cardinal, 1990.

this light the canons may be viewed as a first premonition of a development towards a style determined by counterpoint rather than by tonal harmony.

Ein Stelldichein for oboe, clarinet, violin, cello and piano is another piece of programmatic chamber music, based upon a gloomy poem by Dehmel describing the poet's tryst with a dead girl. After a long introduction in slow tempo and a few measures of a fast movement the manuscript stops. The work was apparently abandoned in favour of the still more visionary chamber symphony, which was concluded in July 1906. The rest of the time until the end of 1907 Schoenberg was mainly occupied by composition of instrumental music. Still, he seems to have started a Hölderlin project in 1906; but it was never carried out. Songs on Dehmel texts likewise remained fragments. Still another unfulfilled intention was to compose an opera on Gerhard Hauptmann's *Und Pippa tanzt*, a very successful piece of theatrical naturalism. More fruitful was his occupation with the Swiss-German Conrad Ferdinand Meyer whose *Friede auf Erden* was composed for choir a cappella and eventually published as op. 13. Stylistically, however, this work does not foretell coming events the way *Ein Stelldichein* and the chamber symphony had done.

1907-1919

In December of 1907 Schoenberg for the first time set music to a poem by Stefan George, *Ich darf nicht dankend an dir niedersinken*, op. 14,1. Many years later Schoenberg recalled this event:

Yet the overwhelming multitude of dissonances cannot be counterbalanced any longer by occasional returns to such tonal triads as represent a key. It seemed inadequate to force a movement into the Procrustean bed of a tonality without supporting it by harmonic progressions that pertain to it. This dilemma was my concern, and it should have occupied the minds of all my contemporaries also. [...] This first step occurred in the Two Songs, Op. 14.¹⁰

A decisive event in Schoenberg's career as a composer, the abandonment of tonality as the organizing principle for composition, occurred at the same time as poetry by Stefan George first appeared in his work. This poet was well established at that time, and Schoenberg must have known him, at any rate since February 1904 when songs by Ansgorge to texts by George appeared on a program of the Ansgorge-Verein together with songs by Schoenberg. Already since the early 1890s George had appeared as a significant and somewhat controversial figure in German literature, founding a school of his own, the "George Kreis", and issuing his own journal, *Blätter für die Kunst*. Schoenberg's fascination with George's poetry at this time may be due to the fact that although George was a true symbolist, he still works with the German language in a particularly strict way in terms of rhyme and metre.

¹⁰ Arnold Schönberg, "Rückblick," *Stimmen* 16, Sept. 1949, p. 433. Quoted from *Style and Idea*, p. 86.

Immediately after op. 14 followed the 3rd and 4th movements of the *2nd String Quartet*, op. 10, with a soprano voice added to the ensemble singing two texts by George, *Litanei* and *Entrückung*. After that Schoenberg chose George for his largest solo vocal composition, the *15 Gedichte aus dem "Buch der hängenden Gärten" von Stefan George*, op. 15. Here the theme of love and death, which had governed the *Gurre-Lieder* and *Pelleas und Melisande*, turns up again. The 15 poems constitute the middle part of the tripartite collection of 31 poems. The scene is a park isolated from the outer world, an imaginary landscape. The topic is love and death, but in a most particular way, namely love which never comes to life. The curve is rising and then falling: desire and renunciation. The passion is there, but mostly under the surface. Only in the middle poem, at the turning point, does it flare up: "Wenn ich heut nicht deinen leib berühre / Wird der faden meiner seele reissen"¹¹ – but alas, in vain. It ends in quiet resignation.

The song cycle was first performed in February 1910 together with parts of the *Gurre-Lieder* with piano accompaniment and the atonal *Three Piano Pieces*, op. 11, at a concert arranged by the Verein für Kunst und Kultur. For this occasion Schoenberg wrote a program note which has become famous. Concerning the songs it says:

With the George-Lieder I have succeeded for the first time in approaching an expressive and formal ideal which has haunted me for years. Up until now I lacked the strength and the self-assurance to realize it. But now that I have started definitely upon this road, I am aware that I have burst the bonds of a bygone aesthetic; and, although I am striving towards a goal which seems certain to me, I foresee the opposition which I shall have to overcome; I feel the heat of the animosity which even the least temperaments will generate, and I fear that some who have believed in me up till now will not admit the necessity of this evolution.¹²

What Paul Bekker said of *Erwartung* in 1924 is true already with reference to the George-Lieder:

The abolition of the tonal consciousness [...], the shift to a multiple tonality by keeping the basic principles of musical shape intact certainly does not deprive the expression of its delusion. But it transfers it from the effect of naturalistic affectation to a – so to speak – transcendental region of concept.¹³

The poetic contents are interpreted as symbolizing an abstract force in the music: the chromatic tonality – or atonality – corresponds to a displacement from the sphere of naturalism to the region of the soul.

¹¹ "If I can not touch your body today the thread of my soul will burst."

¹² Quoted from Alan P. Lessem, *Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg. The Critical Years 1908-1922* (Studies in Musicology vol. 8), p. 38. [Ann Arbor], UMI Research Press, 1979.

¹³ Paul Bekker, "Erwartung," *Arnold Schönberg zum fünfzigsten Geburtstage. 13. September 1924. Musikblätter des Anbruch*, Special issue, 1924, p. 279.

Op. 15 is a turning point in Schoenberg's career, also for the fact that it seems to mark the last time he was explicitly looking for inspiration in modern poetry. His acquaintance with Richard Gerstl, the painter, and his own involvement in painting turned his mind ever more towards self-expression, far removed from the formally so strictly disciplined symbolism of George. In other words, Schoenberg became an expressionist. This came to an outburst in the *Three Piano Pieces*, op. 11, and the *Five Orchestral Pieces*, op. 16, immediately followed by the monodrama *Erwartung* composed in a fortnight's creative furioso in August-September 1909.

The text was written by a young medical student and budding poetess, Marie Pappenheim. Who of them perceived the idea of this dramatic monologue on a woman's loneliness, anguish and mental dissolution is not known. In any case, she wrote it on Schoenberg's suggestion, and it must have met his expectations perfectly, since he composed the music right away as soon as he got the text in his hands. This idea of suggesting or even devising his texts himself was followed up the next year when Schoenberg, entirely on his own, wrote the libretto for the opera *Die glückliche Hand*. In an almost autobiographical way it depicts the life of a divinely gifted artist whose bent for carnal lust prevents him from attaining a higher level for himself in his coming life in the chain of reincarnations. The music was completed in 1913.

After 1910 we find Schoenberg still composing music to texts by Maeterlinck, in op. 20, Ernest Dowson translated by George, in op. 22,1, and Rilke, in op. 22,2-4, during the years 1911-16. Significant as these songs are musically, the choice of texts for them seems to be determined by the fact that in one way or another they reflect feelings and states of mind which otherwise occupied Schoenberg during those years. These were inspired by Balzac's novel *Séraphita* based upon the visions of the Swedish naturalist and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1778). Seraphita is a phantom, now spirit and now human being, now woman and now man. People feel elated by contact with her – or him; but the relationship never gets close – and certainly not physically. In 1912 Schoenberg sketched the beginning of an oratorio based upon the last chapter of the novel describing Seraphita's spiritualization, conversion into an angel and transfer to eternity.

But now another break occurred. In 1911 Schoenberg had settled in Berlin for the second time. Through the concert manager Emil Gutmann he was approached by Albertine Zehme, singer and actress. She was fascinated by and allegedly used to identify herself with the figure of Pierrot, as it appears in the Belgian poet Albert Giraud's *Cinquante rondels bergamasques*, translated and supplemented by further six poems by Otto Erich Hartleben of the former Brettl-group. Previously she had performed some of Otto Vriesländer's Pierrot-songs of 1904. But now she was advocating melodrama and wanted them composed like that, for reciter and piano. Schoenberg was enthusiastic with the idea and wrote in his diary on January 28 1912: "A marvellous idea, quite right for me."¹⁴ Unfortunately

¹⁴ Quoted from Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg*, p. 195.

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SERENADE

Op. 24

für

Klarinette, Bassklarinette, Mandoline, Gitarre, Geige, Bratsche,
Violoncell und eine tiefe Männerstimme (4. Satz: Sonett von
Petrarca)

von

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

1. Marsch
2. Menuett
3. Variationen
4. Sonett von Petrarca
(für eine tiefe Männerstimme)
5. Tanzscene
6. Lied (ohne Worte)
7. Finale

Auf Grund der Quellen revidierte Ausgabe

von

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he does not specify why. One may assume that anyway part of the reason has been the fact that these texts offered Schoenberg the opportunity of taking his departure in the trend of his short pieces – *Three Pieces for Chamber Orchestra*, 1910, and *Six Little Piano Pieces*, op. 19, 1911 – and, by occasionally reintroducing traditional compositional devices provoked by the text, start a development out of the ultra-short conception.¹⁵

When he wrote these poems in the early 1880s, Giraud was a member of *Parnasse de la jeune Belgique*, a literary group in Bruxelles. They display a sharply ironical disclosure of human society and attitudes under the cover of figures from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, dwelling on bloody, bizarre and pathological aspects of the figures' nocturnal adventures. It is good to remember, as Gabriele Beinhorn has pointed out, that the meaning of "Pierrot lunaire" is not, as commonly believed, "the moonstruck Pierrot", but rather "the deluded Pierrot".¹⁶ All the poems are shaped in the rondel form of 13 lines, of which line 1 and 2 return as line 7 and 8, and line 1 reappears as the last line. This most artificial form has been carefully reproduced in Hartleben's translations.

Of the large collection of 50 poems Schoenberg chose 21, grouping them into three sections of seven each, the first dealing with the magic aspects of the moon, the second containing ghostly and absurd visions, whereas the third section is centered around the theme of longing back home. But Schoenberg could not stop at the piano. Already the first melodrama to be composed, "Gebt an Pierrot", includes a clarinet, and the next one, "Der Dandy", further a flute. After six weeks the ensemble had grown into five musicians playing eight instruments: piano, flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin/viola and cello. In this way Schoenberg, by combining the instruments differently, was able to give each of the 21 melodramas its own specific instrumental flavour. Only in the last one, "O alter Duft aus Märchenzeit", all eight instruments are applied. *Pierrot Lunaire* turned out to become one of Schoenberg's best known and most highly praised compositions.

The religious thoughts provoked by the experience with *Séraphita*, however, continued. This is reflected in Maeterlinck's *Herzgewächse*, op. 20, and particularly in the orchestral songs op. 22. Not only does the first of these, by Ernest Dowson, explicitly deal with *Séraphita*; but the three others, to texts by Rilke, can easily be seen as reflections on this figure, although the poet hardly had that in mind. In nos. 2 and 3, "Alle, welche dich suchen" and "Mach mich zum Wächter deiner Weiten", he is speaking to somebody who might well be *Séraphita*, and no. 4, "Vorgefühle", is a monologue by one who has received an inspiration of the kind brought about by *Séraphita*.

In December 1912, while he was working on the *Séraphita*-oratorio, Schoenberg received a letter from Richard Dehmel, who had heard a performance of

¹⁵ Cf. Joseph Auner, "Warum bist du so kurz?" *Festschrift Jan Maegaard*, Mogens Andersen, Niels Bo Foltmann, Claus Røllum-Larsen ed., p. 60. Copenhagen, Engstrøm & Sødning, 1996.

¹⁶ Gabriele Beinhorn, *Das Grotteske in der Musik: Arnold Schönbergs "Pierrot Lunaire"* (Musikwissenschaftliche Studien, H.H. Eggebrecht ed., vol. 11), p. 155. Pfaffenweiler, Centaurus, 1989.

Verklärte Nacht and was enthusiastic. Schoenberg in his response expressed his great admiration for Dehmel and told him that through his poetry he had been able to find a new tone in his music. He then mentions a plan for an oratorio he has had in mind for a long time, dealing with

how modern man who has passed through materialism, socialism and anarchy, who has been an atheist but still has saved a rest of old faith (in the form of superstition), how this man wrestles with God (see also “Jakob ringt” by Strindberg) and finally succeeds in finding God and becoming religious. Learning to pray!¹⁷

After having given up writing the text himself or using Strindberg, he had now decided for Balzac’s *Séraphita*. But he could never forget the idea of ‘modern man’s prayer’. So: “If only Dehmel...!” he suggests. But Dehmel refused; instead he sent Schoenberg his new *Oratorium natale* which, however, did not fit into the plan for the oratorio.

Schoenberg then changed the plan for the oratorio to become a huge symphony including four texts by Dehmel, among them *Oratorium natale*, five by Rabindranath Tagore, Schoenberg’s own *Totentanz der Prinzipien* and quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah together with other quotations from the Bible. The plan underwent several changes, and was never carried out. The decisive step was taken when Schoenberg wrote his new text *Die Jakobsleiter*. It was started three days after the *Totentanz*-text was finished, and designated “IV. Satz”. This grew into such dimensions that he eventually decided to abandon the other movements and develop just this text into an oratorio. It was completed in 1917, whereupon the composition of it was immediately started. After composing 603 measures in less than four months Schoenberg was called to military service in September of that year. Although he was released already in December, this break proved fatal. During the following years until 1922 further 100 measures were added in bits. Then the manuscript stops. The reason for this may be that Schoenberg was now developing his new 12-tone technique and did not feel able to continue the older work under those circumstances – although it actually does contain the first example ever of applying a 12-tone row. The resources originally foreseen for this work were huge: 8 vocal soloists, a chorus of 720 and a small chorus offstage, an orchestra of 20 flutes, 20 oboes, 24 clarinets, 20 bassoons, 12 horns, 10 trumpets, 8 trombones, 6 tubas together with percussion, 2 harps, celesta, harmonium and strings plus four small orchestras offstage.

In 1945, after having retired from his position at the University of California, Los Angeles, Schoenberg wanted time and quiet to complete the work and to reduce the resources to a more normal size. He therefore applied for a Guggenheim fellowship; but it was not granted. Finally, less than a month before his death in July 1951, he called upon his former student Karl Rankl to help him

¹⁷ Joachim Birke, “Richard Dehmel und Arnold Schönberg. Ein Briefwechsel,” *Die Musikforschung* XI,3 1958, p. 282.

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Please refer to a printed copy of the issue.

*The first edition of Schoenberg's orchestral songs op. 22
with Gertrud Schoenberg's dedication to Jan Maegaard*

finish part I; that, of course, was too late. After Schoenberg's death Winfried Zillig, another former student, prepared the score in accordance with the master's intentions. This has since then been used for performances of the big torso.

The text of *Die glückliche Hand* had dealt with the time from birth to death. In *Die Jakobsleiter*, the time from death to rebirth is the subject. It opens with the archangel Gabriel's words: "Ob rechts, ob links, vorwärts oder rückwärts, bergauf oder bergab – man hat weiterzugehen, ohne zu fragen, was vor oder hinter einem liegt."¹⁸ Various groups of dead souls pass by, and Gabriel counsels and admonishes them. After a long interlude Gabriel advises the souls on their way back to rebirth.

Because of his preoccupation with reincarnation it has been claimed that Schoenberg was under the spell of theosophy.¹⁹ However, in his religious concepts the prayer always occupied a central position, which is not the case in theosophical thinking. Rather, Schoenberg's ideas are rooted in Swedenborg's mysticism. This appears indirectly from Gabriel's opening sentence. Many years later, he referred to what he called "the two-or-more-dimensional space" in order to explain details of his 12-tone technique: "In this space, as in Swedenborg's heaven, (described in Balzac's *Séraphita*) there is no absolute down, no right or left, forward or backward."²⁰ So, Gabriel's line, as quoted above and later used to explain 12-tone composition, stems from Swedenborg, whose view of life and death also included reincarnation.

Another link to Swedenborg can be seen in the article "Das Verhältnis zum Text" from 1912, published in the expressionist magazine *Der blaue Reiter*, edited by Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky. In Swedenborg's biological thinking any organ is composed of minor parts each of which have the basic qualities of the entire organ. Man himself is a microcosmos whose parts correspond to those of macrocosmos. In his article on the relationship to the text Schoenberg says of the work of art:

It is so homogeneous in its composition that in every little detail it reveals its truest, inmost essence. When one cuts into any part of the human body, the same thing always comes out – blood. When one hears the verse of a poem, a measure of a composition, one is in a position to comprehend the whole.²¹

He claims to have completely understood songs by Schubert from the music alone and poems by George from the sound alone. To some people such claims may seem weird; but seen in the light of what Schoenberg called "the unitary perception" they do make sense. And what is more, they help to explain the crisis

¹⁸ "Whether right or left, whether uphill or downhill – one has to go on without asking what is ahead or behind you."

¹⁹ See e.g. Walther Klein, "Das theosophische Element in Schönbergs Weltanschauung," *Arnold Schönberg zum fünfzigsten Geburtstage*, p. 273f.

²⁰ Arnold Schoenberg, "Composition with Twelve Tones," *Style and Idea*, p. 223.

²¹ "The Relationship to the Text". *Ibid.*, p. 144.

in his relationship to texts which Schoenberg seems to have experienced in these years. He found it ever more difficult to compose music to a text he could not completely identify with, and so we see him increasingly relying on texts of his own.

These also include a text of 1916 to be recited as a melodrama together with the music of the *2nd Chamber Symphony*, op. 38. This work was started in 1906, right after the *1st Chamber Symphony*, but was soon abandoned. Work on the composition was resumed in 1911 and again in 1916. The title is *Wendepunkt* (Turning Point), and the message is that one can remain insensible to good luck no less than to bad luck. The rejoicing of good luck is necessarily followed by a collapse. If man seeks and finds the reason for this in himself rather than in outward circumstances, then this marks the beginning of a road towards happiness. When Schoenberg eventually finished the work in 1940 this text was not included.

1920-1933

From the genesis of the 12-tone technique in the early 1920s until his emigration to the USA in 1933 Schoenberg wrote most of his texts himself. According to the manuscript, *Requiem* was started in 1920 or 1921; but the greater part of it was written in November 1923. It is fair to assume that the occasion was the death of his wife Mathilde in October of that year. There is no indication that he ever composed music to it; but it is evident that this was his intention. In the preface of the book *Texte* which contains, in addition to *Requiem*, *Die glückliche Hand*, *Totentanz der Prinzipien* and *Die Jakobsleiter*, he says: "Das sind Texte; das heißt: etwas Vollständiges ergeben sie erst mit der Musik zusammen."²² And in a letter to Zemlinsky of January 1924 he explicitly states that composition of this text will be one of his next projects.²³

Another big work is the play in three acts *Der biblische Weg*.²⁴ It reflects Schoenberg's ever stronger awareness of being a Jew in a society with growing antisemitism. A furious letter of April 1923 to Wassily Kandinsky, his friend up till then, speaks for itself:

For I have at last learnt the lesson that has been forced upon me during this year, and I shall not forget it. It is that I am not a German, not a European, indeed perhaps scarcely even a human being (at least, the Europeans prefer the worst of their race to me), but I am a Jew.²⁵

²² "These are texts; that means: only together with music do they reach accomplishment." *Arnold Schoenberg, Texte*, p. 5. Vienna, Universal Edition, 1926.

²³ Jan Mægaard, *Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg* vol. 1, p. 117. Copenhagen, Wilhelm Hansen, 1972.

²⁴ First published in: Arnold Schönberg, *Testi poetici e drammatici*, Luigi Rognoni ed., Emilio Castellani trans., p. 77-150. Milan, Feltrinelli, 1967. German and English versions, Moshe Lazar trans., in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* XVII,1 & 2, 1994, p. 162-329.

²⁵ *Arnold Schoenberg. Wassily Kandinsky. Letters, Pictures, Documents*, Jelena Hahl-Koch ed., John C. Crawford trans., p. 76. London, Faber & Faber, 1984.

Schoenberg sympathized with the idea of Zionism. In *Der biblische Weg* Max Aruns, the leading character, is active in establishing a Jewish state in an African location. At the end he fails because he betrays one of the ideals he had set for himself. The text was intended as a spoken play with only incidental music, and Schoenberg actually sketched some music for it in 1926 or 1927, but it was never performed or published by Schoenberg.

Although this drama was not intended for composition it deserves our attention, because it turned out to be a preliminary step towards the libretto of *Moses und Aron*, the most remarkable text he ever wrote. Sketches for the scene around the golden calf go back to 1926. In October 1928 the whole of it was conceived as the text for an oratorio in three parts: 1. Moses, Aron and the People, 2. The Dance Around the Golden Calf, 3. Aron's Death.

Exactly when Schoenberg decided to make an opera of the work can not be determined. Since the time between October 1928 and May 1930 was occupied by composition of the comic opera *Von heute auf morgen*, the choir pieces op. 35 and *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* (see below) the decision was probably made shortly before the start of the composition. In a letter to Alban Berg of April 10 1930 he mentions a possible collaboration with Franz Werfel on an opera; however: "... perhaps I shall do »Moses and Aron«."²⁶ So, after the comic opera and the film music he was definitely bent on writing another opera, and he had *Moses und Aron* in mind. The change from an oratoric into an operatic text underwent several phases the last of which was designated "Kompositionsvorlage".

Moses is called upon by God to lead the people out of the Egyptian slavery to the land foreseen for them. But since Moses can think, but not speak ("Meine Zunge ist ungelenkt: ich kann denken, aber nicht reden") his eloquent brother Aron is selected to act as a link between him and the people. A conflict arises between Moses, who knows the will of God but cannot communicate it, and Aron who cares more for the well-being of the people. It reaches a climax when Moses dwells a long time on the mountain of revelation, and Aron allows the people to worship a golden calf. On his return Moses makes the calf disappear and blames Aron for his disobedience. Aron replies that he has yielded to necessity and saved the people from anguish, and he claims that the idea will always somehow be betrayed when it is dressed in words. This brings Moses to despair. He smashes the tables with the ten commandments, which he had just received, to pieces. His last line in the 2nd act is: "O Wort, du Wort, das mir fehlt!" (O word, thou word, that I lack) whereupon he sinks to the ground. These two acts were completed 1930-1932. The story of the 3rd act belongs to the following period, 1934-1951.

The similarity of this libretto to *Der biblische Weg* is obvious. Both deal with the dream of achieving a new land for the people of Israel and of the difficulties in realizing that dream. It has even been maintained that Moses and Aron each

²⁶ *Arnold Schoenberg. Letters*, Erwin Stein ed., Eithne Wilkins, Ernst Kaiser trans., p. 138f. London, Faber & Faber, 1964.

represent one side of Max Aruns' split mind.²⁷ It is true that Aruns' inner conflict appears as a conflict between two characters in the opera; but one should not draw too far-reaching conclusions from that, for although Schoenberg himself in retrospect seems to have seen the one as a preparatory step to the other,²⁸ one should not overlook that *Der biblische Weg* is a political drama about Zionism, whereas *Moses und Aron* is a religious text with implications far beyond the specifically Jewish aspect.

As referred to earlier, there are some more texts by Schoenberg between the major works just mentioned. The *Four Pieces* for mixed chorus, op. 27, from 1925 include two small texts closely related to the metaphysical thoughts which occupied him at the time. The texts for the *Three Satires*, op. 28, from the same time are of course quite different. According to the preface the satirical sting is directed against 1. all those who seek their salvation in the golden mean, 2. those who pretend to strive "back to ...", 3. folklorists and 4. all "-ists", meaning chasers after fashion. Many years later, in a letter of May 1949 to Amadeo Filippi, he explained: "I wrote them when I was very angered by attacks of some of my younger contemporaries, and at this time I wanted to give them a warning that it is not good to attack me."²⁹ No. 2, "Vielseitigkeit", is particularly levelled at Stravinsky. The text begins: "Ja, wer tommerlt denn da? Das ist ja der kleine Modernsky!"³⁰ But Schoenberg tells that the title "Manysidedness" just refers to the fact that one can turn the sheet and read the notes upside down from behind – and still read the same music. This is an example of Schoenberg's sophisticated canonic writing. The appendix contains further three complicated canons; two of them have moralizing, not satirical texts by Schoenberg. From now on we find him constantly occupied by canonic writing, most often though in celebration of a person or an event.

The *Six Pieces* for male choir, op. 35, were also set to texts of his own. No. 6, "Verbundenheit", was published separately by Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund. This one and no. 4, "Glück", are basically tonal, whereas the remaining four pieces are dodecaphonic. The connection to the workers' choral society suggests that in this case Schoenberg intended to reach a wider circle of performers than works by him were otherwise able to reach, and the texts point in the same direction. However, as the work proceeded it turned out to far exceed what could be expected even from a well-trained amateur choir.

Texts not by Schoenberg in this section are few. It is interesting to observe that on two occasions he involved his new wife Gertrud in the process, most significantly so in the comic opera *Von heute auf morgen*. The author of the libretto,

²⁷ See e.g. David Josef Bach, "Du sollst nicht, du musst," *Arnold Schönberg zum 60. Geburtstag*, 13. September 1934. Vienna, Universal Edition, 1934.

²⁸ *Letters*, p. 184.

²⁹ *Letters*, p. 271f.

³⁰ "Look who's beating the drum there? O, it's little Modernsky!" Quoted from Jan Maegaard, "1923 – The Critical Year of Modern Music," *The Nielsen Companion*, Mina Miller ed., p. 103. London, Faber & Faber, 1994.

Max Blonda, is a pseudonym for her, but it has been documented that they collaborated on this text, which deals with matrimonial troubles of restless modern people.³¹ The orchestral piece *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* was composed at the same time. It reflects Schoenberg's fascination by the new film medium, i.e. silent film. He saw wide perspectives in the cooperation of music and moving pictures. For this piece a general plan was laid out: 1. Threatening Danger, 2. Fear, 3. Catastrophe. In order that his music be not too specific in details, he asked his wife to write a number of different stories along that scheme, which she did. Practically at the same time, however, the sound film was invented and took over the scene. This prevented Schoenberg from ever seeing his intentions realized.

Foreign texts include no. 217 in Karl Försters translations of Petrarch's sonnets, "O könnt' ich je der Rach' an ihr genesen" (O could I ever carry through my revenge upon her) for the 4th movement of the *Serenade*, op. 24, for seven instruments, his first vocal composition built upon a 12-tone row, although it does not display fully developed dodecaphonic technique. In this song his old predilection for Petrarch is revived. Schoenberg's pre-dodecaphonic compositions 1920-23 grew out of his expressionistic works, and there is hardly any doubt that he himself perceived them as just as passionate as those. This may account for his choice of this very passionate text by Petrarch. Only from the *Wood Wind Quintet*, op. 26, with its fully developed dodecaphonic technique did the music become more balanced. This is reflected by two Chinese lyrics from Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* in the *Vier Stücke* for choir, op. 27. This collection was much in vogue among composers at that time. A song for baritone and piano from 1927 on Oskar Loerke's poem "Die du vor dir her gesendet" was never completed. Arrangements of six folk songs for *Volksliederbuch für die Jugend*, published by Peters in Leipzig, was a commissioned work, and we do not know whether Schoenberg even took part in choosing the texts.

Shortly before he left Berlin Schoenberg was approached by the poet Jakob Haringer. He was charmed by him, and actually composed three songs to poems of his. But due to the turmoil of that time they got lost, and not until the late 1940s did Schoenberg find them among his papers. He had then forgotten all about them, but he liked them and saw to it that they were published as op. 48. They are the only completed dodecaphonic songs with piano from his hand.

At a senate meeting on March 1 1933 the president of the Preussische Akademie der Künste Max Schillings announced that the new Nazi government wanted Jewish influence to be exterminated from the Akademie, whereupon Schoenberg immediately left the meeting. Although he was reluctant to depart from the German speaking parts of Europe, he and his family felt that they had to emigrate to Paris in May. There Schoenberg officially converted to Judaism. A little later he

³¹ Juliane Brand, "Of Authorship and Partnership: The Libretto of *Von heute auf morgen*," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* XIV,2, 1991, p. 153ff and "A Short History of *Von heute auf morgen* with Letters and Documents," *ibid.*, note 3, p. 259f.

accepted an offer to teach at the Malkin Conservatory in Boston, and in October of that year the family left for America.

1934-1951

After emigrating to the USA Schoenberg found himself in a situation totally different from the one he was used to. This is also evident in his choice of texts. In his new homeland German was a foreign language, and Schoenberg's own command of English was limited. So we find few works based upon texts during the last 17 years of his life, during the first four of these actually none at all.

Most pressing of course was the 3rd act of *Moses und Aron*. But it gave Schoenberg troubles. In March 1933, shortly before leaving Berlin, he had told Walter Eidlitz that he had "so far encountered great difficulties because of some incomprehensible contradictions in the Bible."³² The sketches underwent several changes through the years, and the version which was eventually published was never set to music. As late as May 1950 Schoenberg mentioned to Francisco Siciliani of the Maggio Musicale in Florence the possibility, among others, of performing the work with the 3rd act spoken. This is the way Gertrud Schoenberg recommended that it be performed. Otherwise Schoenberg did not consider German texts until 1949.

But the Jewish problem was constantly on his mind. In 1937 he sketched a symphony. It did not include texts, but there was a program. The semantic contents of the four movements were outlined like this: "1. Predominance (superiority) provokes envie [sic]. 2. Scherzo a) What they think about us, b) what we think about them, c) conclusion. 3. The sacred texts and costumes – Die heiligen Feste und Gebräuche. 4. The day will come."³³ It seems that the plan for this symphony was crossed by another project which fascinated him even more, namely the setting of the Jewish prayer "Kol nidre" which inaugurates the Day of Atonement. This was commissioned by Rabbi Dr. Jakob Sonderling in Los Angeles where Schoenberg had now settled. His admiration for J.S. Bach was great, and one can well imagine that he cherished the idea of adding to Jewish liturgical music a contribution comparable to a Bach cantata. The work was composed in 1938 for reciter, choir and orchestra. Dr. Sonderling wrote an introductory text and arranged an English version of the text proper together with Schoenberg. The music for the text itself was composed on fragments of the traditional melody for that text. But it caused Schoenberg a great deal of trouble, since, as he explained to Paul Dessau, there "actually is not such a melody, only a number of flourishes resembling each other to a certain degree, yet without being identical," so he "chose phrases that a number of versions had in common and put them together in a reasonable order."³⁴ Consequently it was shaped like a chorale melody

³² *Letters*, p. 172.

³³ Josef Rufer, *Das Werk Arnold Schönbergs*, p. 99. Kassel et al., Bärenreiter, 1959.

³⁴ *Letters*, p. 212.

in a Protestant cantata and treated in a similar way. The work was first performed at the night of Yom Kippur on October 4 1938 outside the synagogue. The reason why it was never included in the synagogal ceremony may be that such lavish music is not common practice in Jewish liturgy.

The war broke out, and in 1942 Schoenberg, who had now acquired a fair knowledge of English, found a text by Lord Byron, *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, which appealed to him. It is an ironical "hommage" to Napoleon, who was then haunting Europe, and it ends in a true homage to George Washington as the human symbol of freedom. In the early 1940s these names could easily be taken to represent Adolf Hitler and Franklin D. Roosevelt respectively, and that is no doubt what was in Schoenberg's mind; so here for the first time he chose a text dealing with a political problem without specific reference to Jewish matters. It was composed for reciter and piano quintet; but for the first performance in New York in November 1944 he arranged an orchestral version.

In 1945 Nathaniel Shilkret, composer and publisher, wanted to put together a suite for choir and orchestra on the creation of the world as told in the Bible, composed by refugees from Europe now living in California. He addressed Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Ernst Toch, Darius Milhaud, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Alexander Tansman, commissioning a movement from each of them. Schoenberg chose to compose a prelude for textless choir and orchestra. So, here again is a composition without text, but with a program. The suite was performed in November of that year for the first and, to my knowledge, the last time so far. The *Prelude*, however, was entered into Schoenberg's work list as op. 44, and has since then been both performed and recorded separately.

After the end of World War II, accounts of the cruelties which the Nazi regime had committed, particularly to the Jewish people, were spread. It made an especially strong impression on Jews outside Germany and the occupied countries, who had succeeded in escaping from extinction. Schoenberg, as we know, was among them. His desire to commemorate the many victims was met by a commission from the Koussevitsky Foundation and realized in *A Survivor from Warsaw* for reciter, mens' choir and orchestra. Schoenberg's own text, written in English, is based upon what he had heard of horrors that took place in the ghetto of Warsaw. The reciter, a young Jew who had managed to escape, since he was believed dead, relates dramatically the course of events on a particular day, culminating at the end when the condemned crowd strikes up the hymn "Shema Yisroel" in Hebrew on their way to the gas chambers.

During his last years Schoenberg's health was deteriorating. His eyesight was considerably reduced after a severe heart attack in 1946, so he had to write with a drawing charcoal on enlarged sheets of music paper. Still, his mind was alert. *A Survivor from Warsaw* was composed in less than two weeks in August 1947. During 1949-51 he was working on several compositions for choir. *Israel exists again* on his own text and *Who is like unto Thee, o Lord* on a Biblical text remained fragments. But *Dreimal tausend Jahre* on a text by Dagobert D. Runes and *De profundis*,

Psalm 130 composed to the Hebrew text, were completed, and eventually given the opus numbers 50A and B. Most amazing, however, is that in 1950 Schoenberg, in spite of failing health, undertook what would have become a very big work, had it been completed, namely *Moderne Psalmen*, later changed to *Psalmen, Gebete und Gespräche mit und über Gott*. He wrote 17 texts; the last of them, dated July 3 1951, was left unfinished. The composition of this work for reciter, mixed choir and orchestra was started in October 1950. After 86 measures the manuscript stops. The last words to be set to music are: “Und trotzdem bete ich” (And still, I pray).

But here, again, seriousness and humor stand side by side. What is perhaps the very last musical sketch from Schoenberg’s hand is a funny little fragment of May 9 1951 for song, cello and piano with the text “I got an A in arithmetic” – probably a statement of his 10 years old son Lawrence who, by the way, later became a teacher of mathematics.

On July 13 1951 Schoenberg died.

The overview reveals that Schoenberg went through several phases in his choice of texts. Disregarding folk song arrangements and texts for canons, the following stages of development can be noticed.

1) The early works show a traditional and hardly significant choice of a great many poets, Ludwig Pfau being the only predominant figure.

2) In 1897, acquaintance with Richard Dehmel’s poetry arouses Schoenberg’s awareness of poetical quality and suitability for composition in a modern style, and makes him more selective. Program music appears, also as chamber music. The Brettl lied *intermezzo* interrupts, but does not break this line.

3) After 1907, a crisis in Schoenberg’s choice of texts makes itself felt. Stefan George becomes predominant for a short while. Then the mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg gains vital importance, Biblical texts appear for the first time, and Schoenberg begins to provide his own texts for dramatic and symphonic composition. The cabaret-like *Pierrot Lumaire* interrupts, but does not break this line.

4) The symphonic plans are not fulfilled. In the early 1920s the 12-tone technique is created. This brings vocal composition to a halt until 1925, with the sole exception of the Petrarch sonnet of the *Serenade*, op. 24. Working on texts of his own is intensified. Foreign texts, other than two Chinese poems and three Haringer songs, are not considered.

5) The American years after 1933 are marked by language problems and by the impact of Nazi antisemitism and World War II. Composition of an English text occurs in 1938 for the first time. Composition of German texts is discontinued until 1948. All texts in this group are religious or political or both.

List of Authors

The following list has been compiled from my own studies in the Schoenberg Archives 1958-59, 1964 and 1978-81 supplemented by Giacomo Manzoni's annotated rendering of most of the texts³⁵ and the editorial accounts concerning solo songs with piano, by Chr. Martin Schmidt, and concerning choir pieces and canons, by Tadeusz Okuljar and Martina Sichart, in the edition of Schoenberg's collected works.³⁶ Also Leonard Stein's study of the early songs³⁷ and the Nachod collection³⁸ were consulted. After the five sections corresponding to the division in the survey, a section containing Schoenberg's own texts and a separate list of his vocal canons are added.

If the work has an opus number, this is added. Purely instrumental works are marked "instr.?" Works which, for one reason or another, have come down to us only as fragments are marked "fr.?" At last in the line the year of composition is mentioned, as far as it is known. Within each section, after the anonymous texts, the authors are listed chronologically starting with the earliest one. Items which can not be unequivocally dated are placed in the various sections according to their stylistic appearance or location in a sketch book or otherwise. If a name is a synonym the author's real name is added in sharp brackets.

Before 1900

Fairy-tale: *Hans im Glück*, instr., fr.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): *Mailed*, 1899

Joseph Christian von Zedlitz (1790-1862): *Sehnsucht*, before March 1896

Nikolaus Lenau [Nik. von Niembsch] (1802-50):

Drüben geht die Sonne scheiden, 1893

Friedlicher Abend, before 1897

Frühlings Tod, instr., fr. 1898

Robert Reinick (1805-52):

Im Fliederbusch ein Vöglein sass, before September 1893

Emanuel Geibel (1815-1884):

In meinem Garten die Nelken, before March 1896

Die stille Wasserrose, fr.

Wilhelm Wackernagel (1806-69): *Ich grüne, wie die Weide grünt*, fr. 1893/94

Klaus Groth (1819-99): *Ei du Lütte*

³⁵ Giacomo Manzoni, *Arnold Schönberg. L'uomo, l'opera, i testi musicati*. Milan, Feltrinelli, 1975.

³⁶ Arnold Schönberg, *Sämtliche Werke*, Reihe B, Abt. I, 1981, 1989-90 and Abt. V, 1977, 1991. Mainz-Vienna, B. Schott's Söhne and Universal Edition.

³⁷ Leonard Stein, "Towards a Chronology of Schoenberg's Early Unpublished Songs," *Journal of the Arnold Schönberg Institute* II,1, 1977, p. 72-80.

³⁸ John A. Kimmey Jr., *The Arnold Schönberg-Hans Nachod Collection*. (Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography vol. 41). Detroit, 1979.

- Ludwig Pfau (1821-94): *Einst hat vor deines Vaters Haus*, 1893
Vergißmeinnicht, before September 1893
Mein Schatz ist wie ein Schmeck, 1893/94
Warum bist du aufgewacht, 1893/94
Das Unglück und das Missgeschick, fr. 1893/94
Lied der Schmitterin, 1895/96
Wann weder Mond noch Stern am Himmel steh'n, fr. 1897
Gott grüß dich, Marie
Die Pflanze, die dort über dem Abgrund schwebt
Einsam bin ich und alleine
Du Kleine bist so lieb und hold
Du kehrst mir den Rücken
Könnt ich zu dir, mein Licht
Gute Nacht, fr. 1893/94
- Oskar von Redwitz (1823-91): *Nur das tut mir so bitterweh'*, 1893/94
- Paul Heyse (1830-1914): *Mädchenlied*, 1897
Waldesnacht, 1897
Vorfrühling, fr. 1897
- Albert Traeger (1830-1912): *Siehst du am Weg ein Blümlein blüh'n*, fr.
- Martin Greif [Friedrich Hermann Frey] (1839-1911):
Das zerbrochene Krüglein, 1893/94
Das gefärbte Osterei, fr. 1893/94
- Ada Christen [Christiane von Breden] (1844-1901):
Dass schon die Maienzeit vorüber, 1895
- Ottomar Beta (1845-1913): *Wanderlied*, fr. 1895/96
- Jaroslav Vrchlicky (1853-1912; Friedrich Adler transl.): *Ekloge*
Glaub mir, des Falters Flügelpracht, fr.
- Gustav Falke (1853-1916): *Töter Winkel*, instr., fr.
- Richard Dehmel (1863-1920): *Mädchenfrühling*, 1897
Nicht doch!, 1897
Erwartung, op. 2,1 1899
Jesus bettelt, op. 2,2 1899
Erhebung, op. 2,3 1899
Warnung, op. 3,3 1899
Verklärte Nacht, op. 4, instr. 1899
Mannesbängen, 1899
Aus schwerer Stunde, fr. 1899
Im Reich der Liebe, fr. 1899
Gethsemane, fr. 1899
- Karl von Levetzow (1871-1945): *Dank*, op. 1,1, after July 1898
Abschied, op. 1,2
Auf den Knien

Alfred Gold (1874-1901): *In hellen Träumen*, 1893
 Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929): *Die Beiden*, 1899

1900-1907

- Folk song: *Wie Georg von Frundsberg von sich selber sang*, op. 3,1 1903
Das Wappenschild, op. 8,2 1903/04
Sehnsucht, op. 8,3 1905
Wie kommt es, dass du so traurig bist, fr. 1903
Wie das Kriegsvolk von Georg von Fronsberg singt, fr. 1905
- Francesco Petrararch (1304-74): *Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd*, op. 8,4 1904
Voll jener Süsse, op. 8,5 1904
Wenn Vöglein klagen, op. 8,6 1904
O süsse Blick?, fr. 1905
- James Macpherson (1736-96; Goethe transl.):
Darthulas Grabgesang, fr. 1903
- Goethe (1749-1832): *Deinem Blick mich zu bequemen*, 1903
II canons (see separate list), 1905
- Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812): *Aus dem Spiegel von Arcadia* (Brettl), 1901
- Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843): *Die Kürze*, fr. 1905/06
Sonnenuntergang, fr. 1905/06
Heilig Wesen, fr. 1906
- Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866): *Ermütigung zur Übersetzung der Hamasa*, fr. 1905
- Gottfried Keller (1819-90): *Die Aufgeregten*, op. 3,2 1903
Geübtes Herz, op. 3,5 1903
Ghasel, op. 6,5 1904
Rosenglaube, fr. 1903-04
O wär mein Herz, fr. 1904
Apostatenmarsch, fr. 1905/06
Des Friedens Ende, fr. 1906/07
Wenn schlanke Lilien, fr. 1907
- Hermann Lingg (1820-1905): *Freihold*, op. 3,6 1900
Gruss in die Ferne, 1900
- Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98): *Friede auf Erden*, op. 13 1907
Greif aus, fr. 1906/07
Am Himmelstor, fr. 1906/07
- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900): *Der Wanderer*, op. 6,8 1905
- Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847-85): *Gurre-Lieder*, 1900-01
Hochzeitslied, op. 3,4 1901
In langen Jahren, fr. 1901
Wir müssen, Geliebteste, fr. 1901
- Gustav Falke (1853-1916): *Nachtwandler* (Brettl), 1901
Ein Harfenklang, fr.
Toter Winkel, instr., fr.

- Heinrich Hart (1855-1906): *Natur*, op. 8,1 1903/04
 Julius Hart (1859-1930): *Traumleben*, op. 6,1 1903
 Bruno Wille (1860-1928): *Die tröstende Nacht*, fr.
 Hermann Conradi (1862-90): *Verlassen*, op. 6,4 1903
 Lied eines Sünders, fr. 1905/06
 Gerhard Hauptmann (1862-1946): *Und Pippa tanzt*, fr. 1906/07
 Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949): *Pelleas und Melisande*, op. 5, instr. 1902-03
 Johannes Schlaf (1862-1941): *Waldsonne*, op. 2,4
 Richard Dehmel (1863-1920): *Alles*, op. 6,2 1905
 Ein Stelldichein, fr. 1905
 Besuch, fr. 1906
 Über unsre Liebe, fr. 1906/07
 O, ich denke, fr. 1906/07
 Heinrich Ammann (1864-1950): *Jane Grey*, op. 12,1 1907
 John H. Mackay (1864-1933): *Am Wegrand*, op. 6,6 1905
 Frank Wedekind (1864-1918): *Galathea* (Brettl), 1901
 Otto J. Bierbaum (1865-1910): *Gigerlette* (Brettl), 1901
 Colly (O. Bierbaum?): *Jedem das Seine* (Brettl), 1901
 Hugo Salus (1866-1929): *Der genügsame Liebhaber* (Brettl), 1901
 Einfältiges Lied (Brettl), 1901
 Hermann Löns (1866-1914): *Jeduch*, 1907
 Paul Remer (1867-1943): *Mädchenlied*, op. 6,3 1905
 Kurt Aram [Hans Fischer] (1869-1934): *Lockung*, op. 6,7 1905
 Theodore von Rommel (1870-1950): *Patrouillenritt*, fr. 1906/07
 Carl Busse (1872-1918): *Abendstille*, 1905/06
 Gustav Hochstetter (1873-1944): *Mahnung* (Brettl), 1901
 Wilhelm Scholz (1874-1969): *Nächtlicher Weg*, fr. 1906
 Viktor Klemperer (1881-1960): *Der verlorene Haufen*, op. 12,2

1907-1919

- The Bible: *Symphony* (fr.) 1914-15: Psalm 88, Psalm 92
 Isaiah 58 and 66
 Jeremiah 7 and 17
 Psalm 40, fr.
 Psalm 43, fr.
 Psalm 94, fr. 1912
 Psalm 95, fr.
 Psalm 103, fr.
 Folk song: *Zweifel an menschlicher Klugheit*, fr.
 Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850): *Seraphita*, fr. 1912
 Otto Kernstock (1848-1928): *Der deutsche Michel*, 1914/15
 Albert Giraud [A. Kayenbergh] (1860-1929): *Pierrot Lunaire*, op. 21 1912

- Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): *Symphony* (fr.) 1914-15:
 Tod dein Diener
 Gottheit des zertrümmerten Tempels
 Ich weiss ein Tag wird kommen
 Ich tauche in die Tiefe des Meeres
Ich fühle, dass alle Sternen in mir scheinen, fr. 1919
Lausche, mein Herz, fr.
- Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949): *Herzgewächse*, op. 20 1911
- Richard Dehmel (1863-1920): *Symphony* (fr.) 1914-15: Freudenruf
 Götterhochzeit
 Aeonische Stunde
 Schöpfungsfeier
- Karl F. (not Georg) Henckell (1864-1929): *In diesen Wintertagen*, op. 14,2 1908
- Ernest Dowson (1867-1900): *Seraphita*, op. 22,1 1913
- Stefan George (1868-1932): *Ich darf nicht dankend*, op. 14,1 1907
Litanei, op. 10, 3rd movement, 1907-08
Entrückung, op. 10, 4th movement, 1907-08
Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, op. 15 1908-09
Der Jünger, fr.
Friedensabend, fr.
- Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926): *Alle, welche dich suchen*, op. 22,2 1914
Mach mich zum Wächter deiner Weiten, op. 22,3 1914-15
Vorgefühl, op. 22,4 1916
Die Stille, fr.
Liebes-Lied, fr.
- Marie Pappenheim (1882-1966): *Erwartung*, op. 17 1909
- 1920-1933
- Folk song: *Arrangements*, 1929: Es gingen zwei Gespielen gut
 Herzlieblich Lieb, durch Scheiden
 Schein uns, du liebe Sonne
 Der Mai tritt ein mit Freuden
 Mein Herz in steten Treuen
 Mein Herz ist mir gemenet
- Chinese poetry (Hans Bethge³⁹): *Mond und Menschen*, op. 27,3 1925
Der Wunsch des Liebhabers, op. 27,4 1925
- Petrarch (1304-47): *O könnt ich je der Rach' an ihr genesen*, op. 24,4 1923
- Oskar Loerke (1884-1941): *Die du vor dir hingesendet*, fr. 1927
- Jakob Haringer (1898-1948): *Sommermüd*, op. 48,1 1933
Tot, op. 48,2 1933
Mädchenlied, op. 48,3 1933
- Max Blonda [Gertrud Schoenberg] (1898-1967): *Von heute auf morgen*, op. 32 1928-29

³⁹ Hans Bethge, *Die chinesische Flöte*. Leipzig, Insel, 1908.

1934-1951

The Bible: *Genesis* (no text), op. 44 1945

De profundis (Ps. 130) op. 50B 1950

Who is like unto Thee, o Lord, fr.

Liturgical: *Kol nidre* (Jakob Sonderling), op. 39 1938

Folk song: 3 *arrangements*, 1948: Es gingen zwei Gespielen gut
Der Mai tritt ein mit Freuden
Mein Herz ist mir gemenet

Lord Byron (1788-1824): *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, op. 41 1942

Dagobert D. Runes (b. 1902): *Dreimal tausend Jahre*, op. 50A 1949

Schoenberg's texts (see also Canons)

Aberglaube, fr.

Odoaker, fr.

Die Schildbürger, fr. 1901

Die glückliche Hand, op. 18 1910

Totentanz der Prinzipien, 1915

Chamber Symphony no. 2, 1916 version: *Wendepunkt*

Die Jakobsleiter, 1917

Requiem, 1923

Unentrinnbar, op. 27,1 1925

Du sollst nicht, du musst, op. 27,2 1925

Am Scheideweg, op. 28,1 1925

Vielseitigkeit, op. 28,2 1925

Der neue Klassizismus, op. 28,3 1925

O glaubet nicht, was ihr nicht könnt, sei wertlos, op. 28 Anhang I 1925

Wer Ehr erweist, muss selbst davon besitzen, op. 28 Anhang III 1925

Der biblische Weg, 1926-27

Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene, op. 34, instr. 1929-30

Sechs Stücke für Männerchor, op. 35 1929-30

Moses und Aron, fr. 1930-

Symphony (no text), fr. 1937

A Survivor from Warsaw, op. 46 1947

Israel exists again, fr. 1949

Moderne Psalmen, fr., op. 50C 1950-51

I got an A in arithmetic, fr. 1951

Canons

Goethe: *O, dass der Simmen doch*, 1905

Wenn der schwer gedrückte klagt, 1905

Ein Herr mit zwei Gesind, fr. 1905

Gutes thu, fr. 1905

- Dämmer ist I*, fr. 1905
Wer geboren in bö'sten Tagen, fr. 1905
Dämmer ist II
Wer auf die Welt kommt
Getretner Quark
Einen Helden mit Lust
Was klagst du, fr.
 Schoenberg: *Tonal oder atonal?*, op. 28,1 1925
Vielseitigkeit, op. 28,2 1925
O glaubet nicht, was ihr nicht könnt, sei wertlos, op. 28 App. I 1925
Wer Ehr erweist, muss selbst davon besitzen, op. 28 App. III 1926
Wer mit der Welt laufen will, 1926 (1934)
Von meinen Steinen, 1926
Arnold Schönberg beglückwünscht, 1928
Spiegle dich am Werk, 1931
Wo sind die Bilder, 1934
Jedem geht es so, 1933 (text 1943)
Mir auch ist es so gegangen 1933, (text 1943)
Es ist zu dumm, 1934
Darf ich eintreten? 1935
Mister Saunders, I owe you thanks, 1939
I am almost sure, 1945
Gravitationszentrum eigenen Sonnensystems, 1949

RESUME

Schönbergs tekster

Schönbergs valg af tekster til sin musik kan bidrage til at kaste lys over hans kunstneriske udvikling. En komplet oversigt sidst i artiklen lader erkende en række udviklingsfaser. Udgående fra en lidet signifikant begyndelse, hvor blandt andre den socialistiske digter Ludwig Pfau spiller en rolle, indleder hans møde med Richard Dehmels poesi i 1897 en litterært mere kritisk og tildels moderne orienteret holdning. En krise i forhold til tekstvalget sætter dog ind i 1907. Efter en kort orientering mod blandt andre Stefan Georges poesi vendes interessen især mod Emanuel Swedenborgs mysticisme, og også bibelske tekster dukker nu op. I øvrigt går Schönberg i den kommende snes år over til stadig oftere selv at forfatte sine tekster, kulminerende i librettoen til operaen *Moses und Aron*. Tiden i USA fra 1933 til hans død i 1951 bærer til at begynde med præg af hans ringe kendskab til engelsk. Efter nogle år kommer dog både engelske og tyske og endog hebraiske tekster til foruden hans egne; men de er nu alle af enten religiøst eller politisk indhold.